



The President's Daily Brief

December 11, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1),(2),(3)
declassified only on approval of
the Director of Central Intelligence

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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LEBANON

Prime Minister Karami announced last night that his extra-governmental "security committee" had agreed to still another cease-fire. However, the committee, which contains representatives of Lebanon's principal Muslim and Christian political factions, including the right-wing Phalanges Party, has no representative of the radical left.

The radicals have been the Phalangists' chief opponent in the widespread clashes this week and will attempt to keep the fighting going.

Karami came under great pressure to negotiate a new cease-fire yesterday when socialist leader Kamal Jumblatt joined Ibrahim Qulaylat and other radical leftists in charging that the army had intervened to rescue right-wing Phalangists in the hotel district. The army had in fact prevented either side from making significant new gains but had failed to reduce the level of fighting.

According to press reports from Beirut, as many as 850 army commandos and other troops have taken up positions in the city's commercial center. This represents the most extensive army involvement in internal security functions since the state of emergency in May 1973. Despite the call for another cease-fire, fighting continued in most of Beirut last night.

If the fighting should continue at a high level or become still worse, the army might not be able to provide much additional help. The 18,000-man force includes only about 3,600 infantry troops who could be used for security duties.

An estimated 2,000 of these troops have over the past several weeks been detailed to the government's exhausted 6,000-man internal security force. They have been guarding government buildings in

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Beirut, patrolling the periphery of the city, securing the road to the airport, and manning buffer zones between opposing factions in the Tripoli-Zagharta and Zahlah areas.

The army's effectiveness in wider hostilities would be limited by the likelihood that its units would divide along religious lines. Because the force so far has been used primarily for patrol duties and has seen little sustained combat, this has not yet become a significant problem.

Karami's willingness to have the army help enforce the new cease-fire despite leftist criticism apparently reflects the generally constructive attitudes of the Syrian government and leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Lebanese branch of the Syrian Baath Party has been one of few groups to reaffirm its support for Karami this week.

Palestinian leaders have helped by avoiding criticism of the army and endorsing the latest cease-fire.

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INDONESIA - PORTUGUESE TIMOR

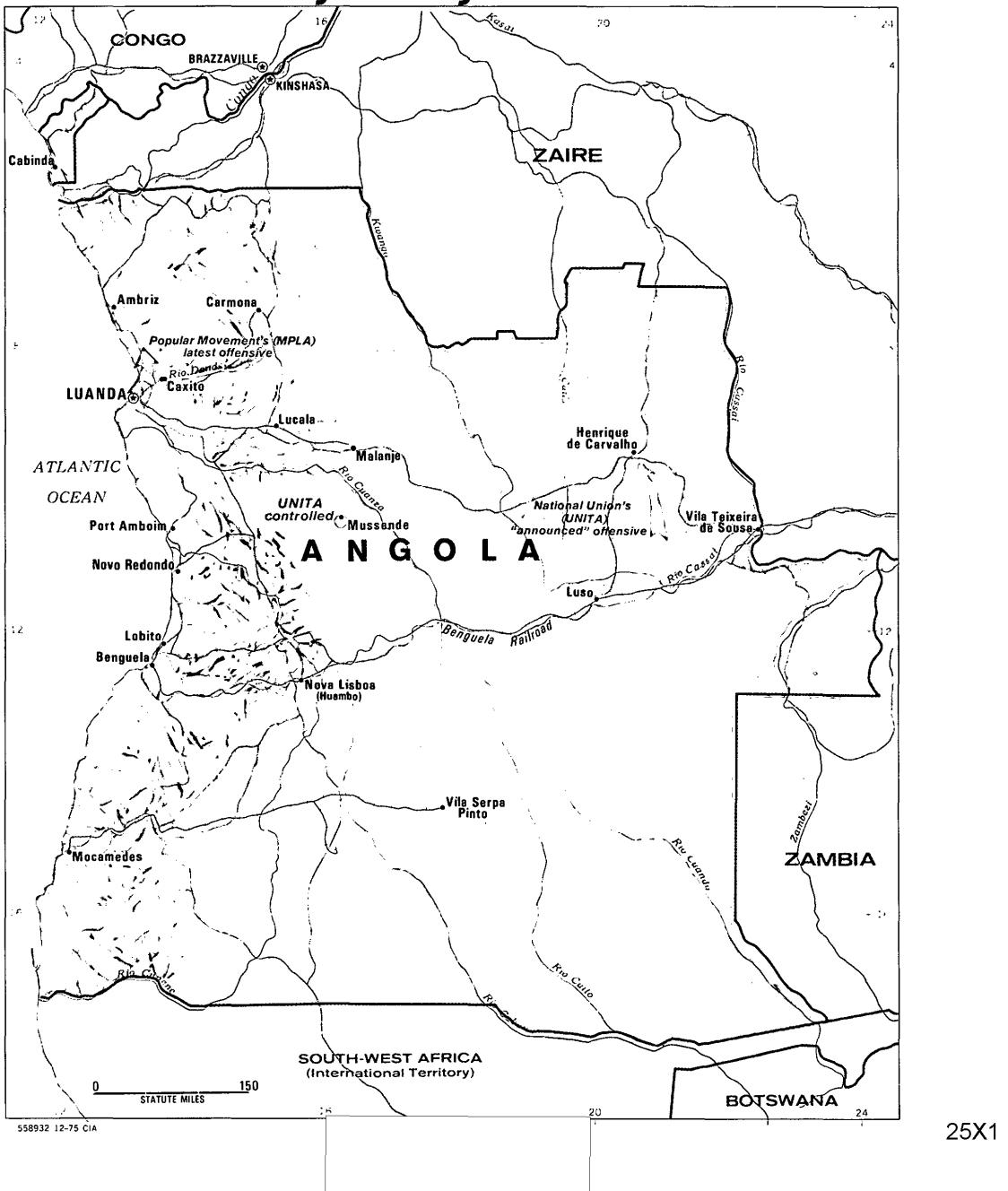
Indonesia's Asian friends are working to undercut criticism of Jakarta by other third world states and to work out a UN resolution on Timor that all sides can accept. Indonesia's partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations--Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, and Thailand--have joined other Asian states at the UN in seeking a compromise resolution that will avoid condemning Indonesia for aggression.

The problem is particularly delicate for the Australian government, which is in the midst of a bitter election campaign. Left-wing trade unionists supporting the Fretelin cause are being joined by usually conservative veterans of World War II, who served in Timor and feel an emotional tie to its people. Australia hopes to work through the UN for a compromise resolution that "deplores" Indonesian action without going much further, but Canberra is doubtful that a resolution can be so limited.

Even Jakarta's severest critics do not seem to believe that Fretelin is a viable government. Both China and Vietnam have denounced Indonesian aggression, but neither has recognized Fretelin's declaration of independence. As the self-proclaimed leader of the third world, Peking undoubtedly felt obliged to criticize Jakarta, but *People's Daily* expressed China's "hope" that the Timor issue would not become an obstruction to Peking's continuing efforts to improve relations with Jakarta. Hanoi took the opportunity to blame Washington for encouraging the Indonesian attack.

Indonesian troops on Portuguese Timor are now operating from both the Dili and Baucau areas, and additional forces have been sent to the island. Indonesian troops there now total over 15,000.

Current Military Activity

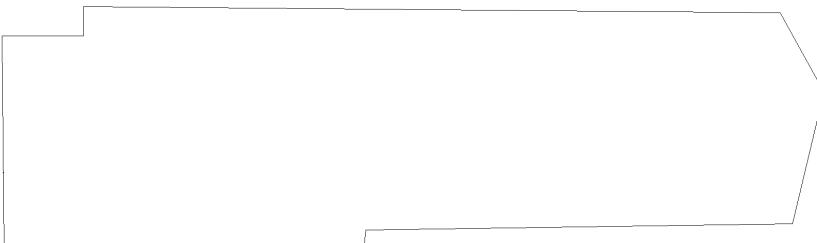


ANGOLA

The offensive launched by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola last week against Ambriz, the headquarters of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, appears to have stalled some 50 miles south of its target. The National Front has been destroying bridges as it retreats to Ambriz and farther north. The Popular Movement's supply lines from Luanda probably have slowed down because of the onset of the rainy season.

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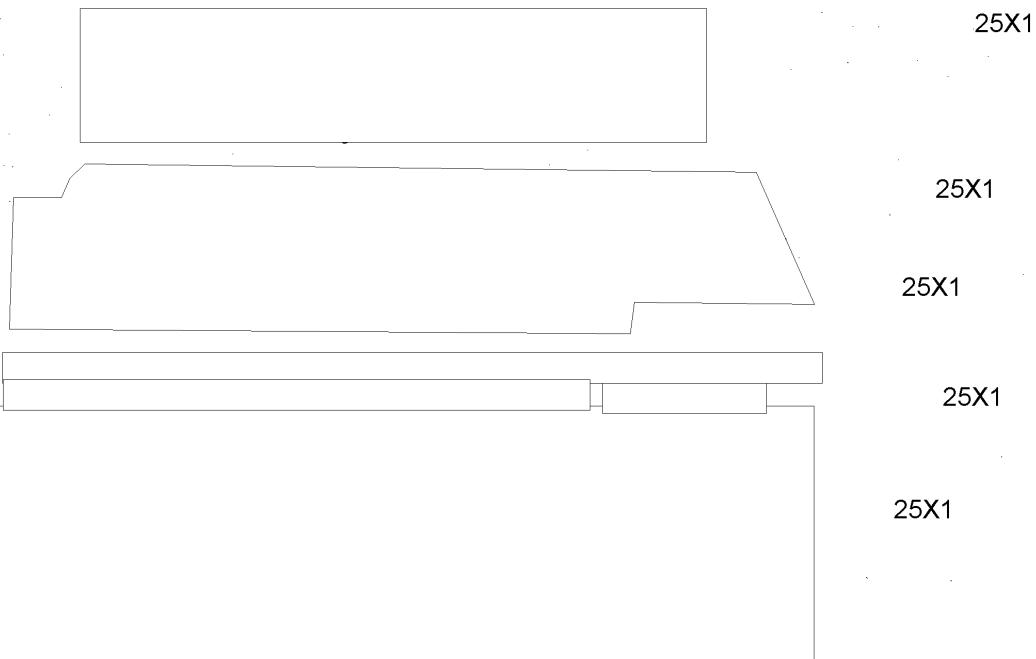


In the fighting southeast of Luanda, forces of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola yesterday retook Mussende from the Popular Movement, which had captured the town the day before. The National Union had used Mussende as an operational base in its now-stalled drive to take Malanje.

A National Union spokesman announced in Lusaka, Zambia, last weekend that Union forces had "launched an offensive" against Henrique de Carvalho, the Popular Movement's major stronghold in eastern Angola. The extent of the fighting in that area cannot yet be determined.

USSR-ANGOLA-ZAIRE

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PORTUGAL

Major Ernesto Melo Antunes, a key member of Portugal's Revolutionary Council, has announced that the military is prepared to allow civilians a greater role in running the country, but he ruled out an early return to civilian rule. Antunes' statement was in response to recent demands by both military and civilian political leaders that the Armed Forces Movement relinquish power and return to the barracks.

Antunes conceded at a press conference on Tuesday that the Armed Forces Movement--which has dominated Portugal for the past 20 months--may have to surrender its role as the vanguard of the revolution. He confirmed that a revision of the pact signed with the political parties last spring is under way, but he stressed that a precipitate withdrawal by the military could endanger its program for leading the country to socialism.

Among the officers who are pushing the military to withdraw from politics are a number of professional soldiers who believe the people should be allowed to decide whether or not they want socialism. The strength of this faction is not known, but several of the officers are believed to have played a key role in putting down the leftist military rebellion of November 25 and 26. There is evidence that the group's influence is growing and that it may continue to press the Antunes faction to alter both its gradualist approach toward returning power to civilians and its insistence on socialism as an unalterable goal.

The Azevedo government, meanwhile, has survived a split in the centrist Popular Democratic Party. The party's congress reached a compromise over the weekend on Communist participation in the cabinet, thereby assuring that the sixth provisional government can continue in office.

With the defection of some of the members of its left wing, the Popular Democratic Party has lost many of its most effective organizers and has narrowed its appeal exclusively to the right.

SPAIN

The government is preparing for an extensive cabinet reshuffle that will bring in leaders willing to nudge the country toward a more open political system.

The new government, which could be sworn in as early as Friday, may retain only three members of the present 19-member cabinet

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Whatever the composition of the new government, it will face a baptism by fire. The localized strikes that are taking place this week are likely to be forerunners of more serious labor unrest this winter.

A number of important collective bargaining contracts are due to expire December 31, and last month the government extended the wage freeze--introduced early last summer--for one year. The

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extension has angered most workers and will make the labor movement more receptive to Communist attempts to politicize the country's economic difficulties and organize a paralyzing general strike early next year.

The government also will have to cope with an increasing number of potentially violent demonstrations as the opposition steps up demands for complete amnesty for political prisoners, legalization of all political parties--including the Communists--and an opening up of the government labor organization.

JAPAN-KOREA-VIETNAM

Japan and South Korea have praised your speech in Honolulu this week. North Korea strongly denounced it, and Vietnam has taken a critical stance.

The Japanese are pleased at the reaffirmation of an active US role in Asia and the importance of the US-Japanese alliance. Both your trip and your address were widely publicized in Japan.

Tokyo also is pleased that US relations with Peking remain on course and by indications of a flexible US approach to Indochina. The Japanese view your visits to Jakarta and Manila as important symbols of continued US involvement in Southeast Asia.

South Korea has focused more narrowly on Washington's determination to maintain its commitments to allies in Asia. North Korea denounced US policy as aimed at perpetuating the division of Korea. It criticized the US-Japanese alliance and ignored your remarks about improving US-Chinese relations.

Hanoi rejected your expression of good will toward Vietnam, stating that the US still refuses to address the issue of compensation for war damages.

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China

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Joshua Nkomo, the leader of a major faction of Rhodesian black nationalists, announced yesterday that formal negotiations with Prime Minister Ian Smith aimed at achieving a constitutional settlement will begin today.

Nkomo says he will lead a 12-man delegation to the talks. The delegation almost certainly will not include Nkomo's most prominent rivals, Ndabanningi Sithole and Bishop Muzorewa, who have denounced from exile the Smith-Nkomo meetings. Settlement talks will be prolonged and difficult, and ultimate success is far from assured. In any event, Smith can be expected to employ tactics aimed at avoiding a final settlement for as long as possible.

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